



## One woman and her dog

**A**ward-winning shepherdess Emma Gray has been signed up by her old college to run sheepdog training sessions.

Emma, who last year became the first female winner of the Northumberland Sheepdog Trials League in its 40-year history and has also represented England in the International sheep dog trials, will be working at Northumberland College's Kirkley Hall campus.

The former Kirkley Hall student, a third generation farmer, will be delivering sessions one afternoon

a-week.

"By the time I was 17, I knew I wanted to work with dogs and with my faithful border collie, Bill, in tow, I got a place on a specialised sheep management course at the Kirkley Hall campus," said 27-year-old Emma, who runs a remote 120-acre farm near Harwood in Northumberland's National Park.

"She added: 'I'm delighted to be able to come back to Kirkley Hall campus to deliver sheep dog training and I am looking forward to passing on my shepherding skills to others.'"

Monday, January 13, 2014  
[www.feweek.co.uk](http://www.feweek.co.uk)

Pic: North News & Pictures Ltd

Emma Gray, 27, with sheepdog Roy

## Leading London college tumbles to inadequate

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One of London's largest FE colleges, and a former outstanding one, has crashed to a grade four Ofsted rating.

LeSoCo, a 17,600-learner college in South London, has been graded inadequate after its latest inspection, less than two months ago.

The education watchdog's report criticised poor teaching in engineering and foundation English and maths, as well failing to get enough apprentices through their training on time.

Among the criticisms was that the "teaching of functional skills is inadequate. In most subject areas teachers do not use the results from the initial assessment to inform the planning of learning".

It is not yet known if the outcome is bad enough to prompt a visit from FE Commissioner David Collins, however, the college,

which has a current Skills Funding Agency allocation of £26.2m, could be facing the boot from high-performing colleges' body, the 157 Group.

Principal Maxine Room told FE Week she "did not" recognise the grading and would appeal. "While we fully accept the need for improvements in some areas of our teaching and learning provision, we do not recognise the grading of the college as inadequate and will appeal," she said.

The college was formed of a merger in 2012 between Lewisham College — rated outstanding in 2006, before dropping to satisfactory (a grade three and now termed 'requires improvement') in 2012 — and Southwark College, which was graded inadequate in December 2011.

However, Ofsted said the college management of the merger had been a strength, but it nevertheless got a grade four result overall and also in the teaching, learning and assessment headline field. It was deemed to require

improvement on outcomes for learners and leadership and management.

The Ofsted report said: "Staff do not set learning targets for learners or track their progress effectively. Tutorials are often unproductive [and] many learners cannot recall when they last received a tutorial, when they were given individual targets relating to their qualification, or when they had a discussion about issues such as attendance."

Ms Room said she was "devastated" by the outcome of the inspection and criticised the way the report appeared to let poor performance in English and maths bring down the college's overall rating. "If you look at the proportionality of the grading, 80 per cent of the provision was grade two, and 20 per cent was grade three and four," she said.

"The weighting on English and maths has outweighed the rest of the provision, and that is what we think is unfair." Ms Room also said the college had a post-inspection

action plan in place and that a number of visiting tutors had been removed in the past year because of poor performance.

But, she said, it was "not the time to talk about blame" and she had "no intention" of resigning. Nevertheless, she also criticised Ofsted for failing to keep the college informed about the outcome of the inspection.

Ofsted said it took complaints seriously, but would not comment on individual cases.

Lynne Sedgmore, 157 Group executive director, said it was too early to comment on LeSoCo's future membership of the group, but said she was "surprised and disappointed" by the report.

A spokesperson for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills declined to comment on whether the FE Commissioner, who was appointed as a troubleshooter for failing colleges, would be sent into LeSoCo.

LeSoCo among 104 'overpaid' providers Page 2  
Another college crash, editor's comment Page 4



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Top DfE funding cut tweets:

- 

@RichardBurdenMP  
In Commons today I asked why Ministers are cutting funding for over 18s in Further Education by 17.5 per cent despite many needing extra support
- 

@carolinenokes  
Funding cuts for FE and sixth form colleges 'desperately sad'. Have raised this in Parliament
- 

@smurph99  
Good to see lots of MPs asking why FE funding for 18 year olds cut so drastically - biggest impact in deprived wards
- 

@shanechowen  
Good to see MPs representing views of concerned FE Principals on 17.5 per cent funding cut to 18-year-olds @carolinenokes @Debbie\_abrahams @RichardBurdenMP
- 

@eddieplayfair  
550 ambitious and hard working year two students @talknewvic will face a 17.5 per cent aspiration tax in 14/15: why hit neediest so hard? #aspirationtax

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Cash queries over maths qual

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The government unveiled plans for a new level three qualification to keep young people studying maths until 18, but sector bodies have expressed concerns over funding.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA) welcomed the aims of government proposals published last week to introduce a "core maths" qualification targeted at the 200,000 students a year who achieve C or above at GCSE but who do not take maths A-level.

However, SFCA deputy chief executive James Kewin (pictured top) challenged the government to "match its ambition for curriculum reform with the funding required to deliver it".

Core maths would sit alongside students' main 16 to 18 study, according to the Department for Education (DfE) policy statement.

It is expected to be half the size of an A-level, preparing students for employment and study where maths is not the sole focus, but a basic level of numeracy is required.

The DfE document said: "One of the main reasons for introducing new qualifications is to address the 16 to 18 'maths gap', whereby students often forget the maths they have learnt previously."

The announcement comes just four months after an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report found England was the only country where older generations had higher proficiency in numeracy than young adults.



Mr Kewin said: "We share the government's ambition for more young people to study maths to an advanced level. But if the stated ambition for introducing these new qualifications is to address the 16 to 18 'maths gap', the government would be well advised to first address the 16 to 18 'funding gap' — the plans for

these new qualifications were unveiled shortly after the third cut to sixth form funding in three years."

He said cuts had already led to fewer sixth form colleges offering further maths.

Joy Mercer (pictured below), AoC policy director, said the move toward's new maths qualification was "welcome".

But, she added: "Sixth form and FE colleges will need to employ more teachers to meet demand for these courses."

"The DfE identified earlier this year that 1,200 additional teachers are necessary to teach GCSE level after the age of 16. Colleges tell us they are struggling to recruit and when this higher level maths qualification is introduced it will be even more difficult."

The DfE proposal added that new performance measures could recognise the proportion of students gaining level three maths qualifications.

Ms Mercer said: "AoC cannot understand why this would be a separate accountability measure in performance tables as take-up will be affected by how well it is received by employers and higher education, not by performance tables."

The qualification technical guidance is due to be published in March, with the qualifications widely available from September 2015.



Providers underpaid on ASB by £61.8m

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Just over half of all providers in England were not paid for all the work they carried out last academic year, leaving some providers "very disappointed".

The Funding Year Values released by the Skills Funding Agency last month showed 51 per cent (514) of the 1015 providers included were paid less than the value of their total 2012/13 adult skills budget (ASB) delivery.

It is the second year that the Funding Year Values have been published, revealing a total underpayment of £61.8m — a stark contrast to the £91m total overpayment to providers last year, as reported at the time in FE Week.

However, the agency insisted it had provided funding according to its allocation this year.

London's City Lit was paid £2.2m less than the £8.7m-worth of learning it delivered.

Meanwhile, Derby College went unfunded for 10 per cent (£1.8m) of its £18.5m-worth of provision.

Derby College chief executive Mandie Stravino told FE Week: "We are very disappointed that our over delivery will not be funded."

"We have met the needs of our local businesses and our wider community... and feel strongly that this should be recognised finan-

	Providers		Delivered	Funded
Underpaid	514	51%	£2,083,604,224	£2,016,187,575
Overpaid	104	10%	£338,409,605	£344,067,465
Equal	397	39%	£328,576,678	£328,576,678
Total	1015		£2,750,590,507	£2,688,831,718

cially, as in previous years."

She added although the "agency's departure from funding over-delivery" was not expected to cause job losses, it would result in reduced adult delivery and impact upon learners with additional learning support needs.

The same figures reveal 10 per cent of providers (104) received more cash than the value of training they delivered.

An agency spokesperson said: "We have funded all delivery up to the allocation awarded to colleges for 2012/13 and in addition we have funded all adult apprenticeship delivery."

"Instances where funding has been paid in excess of the allocation is due to the agency paying additional funds for learner support and adult apprenticeships."

No one from the agency was available to clarify why such "additional learner support and adult apprenticeships" provision was not included in the providers' delivery figures.

The most striking example of overpayment was LeSoCo, which was paid more than £3.3m (15 per cent) over what it delivered.

It comes in addition to the £2.2m in 2011/12 reported by FE Week in January last year,

FE Week news in brief

Enter learners' week

Entrants to this year's Adult Learners' Week Awards are being invited by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Niace).

It has declared this year's awards, which recognise adult learners, employers and projects across England, open.

For details on how to nominate someone for the awards, email alw@niace.org.uk or phone 0116 204 4200.

The closing date for nominations is 5pm on Thursday, January 30.

Skills statement wait

Providers remain in the dark over the publication date of the Skills Funding Statement for the academic year 2014/15.

The statement, is usually published shortly after the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, which this year came in December.

A BIS spokesperson said: "We appreciate that the sector is waiting for the skills funding statement."

"We are finalising the budgets and will publish once the process is complete."

Fed report due 'soon'

A report into the Barnfield College Federation will be published "as soon as possible" according to the Department for Education (DfE) although no date has been set.

The federation, in Luton, was investigated by the DfE and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) following "serious allegations relating to financial irregularities and governance".

A DfE spokesperson said: "The SFA and DfE investigation reports have not yet been finalised. These will be published as soon as possible."

making a total over-payment of £5.6m in the last two years.

An agency spokesperson said: "To ensure the interests of learners and employers were protected, the agency at the time agreed to remove the college from the normal year end rules [during merger of Lewisham College and Southwark College]. This was for the academic years 2011/12 and 2012/13."

A college spokesperson said the arrangement was "in recognition that it would be very difficult to achieve the funding targets in the first year after the merger".

A City Lit spokesperson said the agency had paid the college's full allocation, adding: "We don't expect to be paid for over performance on classroom-based learning unless they have an underspend issue nationally."

A spokesperson for Learndirect, which was underfunded by £1,437,766, said: "Due to the economic circumstances in 12/13 we saw high demand for our services which exceeded our allocated funding."

A small number of providers were excluded from the figures as the agency was "still finalising their final 2012/13 position".



# Hancock faces MPs' wrath over DfE cut

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Members of the Education Select Committee could probe controversial government plans to cut funding for full-time education for 18-year-olds.

Committee member Pat Glass said she would be calling for an inquiry into proposals to fund 18-year-olds by 17.5 per cent less than 16 and 17-year-olds.

It comes as she and fellow committee members await an impact assessment on the funding rate cut that was promised in mid-December by Education Secretary Michael Gove.

And House of Commons education questions on Monday, January 6, saw Skills Minister Matthew Hancock come in for tough questioning on the matter — and the issue of the impact assessment was raised.

Ms Glass told *FE Week*: “The 18+ funding was the main topic of conversation, raised by loads of Labour MPs, me included, and the impact assessment was promised but no date given.

“I intend to talk to Graham Stuart [Education Select Committee chair] and suggest the committee does a short inquiry just into cuts to 18+ funding — keeping it short and limited.”

Labour’s Clive Eltham was one of the MPs to question Mr Hancock in the Commons, saying: “The Association of Colleges has said that young people from disadvantaged areas and black and minority ethnic groups will be hardest hit by the cut of 17.5 per cent in the funding for 18-year-olds.

“That is borne out by the assessment that has been carried out by my local college, Greenwich Community College. Why have the government not issued an impact assessment on this proposal, given the severe impact that it will have on disadvantaged groups?”

Mr Hancock told MPs that he had seen the impact assessment and that its findings would



Zoe Lewis, principal of Middlesbrough College, and David Riddle, director of the sixth form centre, help get building work started. Inset: The sixth form centre as it looks now (left) and a computer-generated image showing how it will look once work is complete (right)

## Growing college demand prompts £3m newbuild

Work has started on a £3m extension to Middlesbrough College’s sixth form centre after bosses saw a 33 per cent increase in demand for places.

The centre serves 500 A-level learners, but it is set to double in size to cater for 1,000 students once work has finished,

by August.

The new block will contain 14 classrooms, a science lab and student common rooms over three levels.

Principal Zoe Lewis said: “We’ve seen a remarkable increase in the number of applications and this extension shows the level

of commitment the college has in delivering first class A-levels courses.”

The extension is part of a wider college development programme, which will also involve building a new £12m science, technology, English and maths (STEM) centre next year.

provide reassurance about the funding rate cut.

He said: “This is a difficult decision and not one that we will take lightly, but the alternatives are also difficult, and 18-year-olds have already had two years of study post 16 and, indeed, they often study for fewer hours than 16 to 17-year-olds.”

He added: “We will publish the impact assessment very soon.”

But Eddie Playfair, principal of Newham Sixth Form College in East London, told *FE Week* that he remained sceptical.

He said the proposals as they stand would affect 550 of his learners in 2014/15, creating a

financial impact of just over £500,000, around 3 per cent of the college’s £16m budget.

Mr Playfair said: “We are all looking forward to reading the impact assessment because evidence suggests that disadvantaged students will be hit harder.

“In a sense the very fact that it will be third year students who will be hit is worrying because they are more disadvantaged as low achievers.

“The second point Mr Hancock made about these students needing fewer hours is something I just do not understand. They are doing exactly the same courses, sitting in exactly the same classes. They are exactly the same as

their peers so this is just a funding cut.”

Meanwhile, in response to a written question from Shadow Junior Education Minister Rushanara Ali about a lack of consultation on the funding rate cut, Mr Hancock said: “We wanted to inform colleges and schools of the decision as soon as possible, to support planning for the 2014/15 academic year.

“It has been standard practice under various governments not to consult on funding rates.”

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said there was no date for the release of the impact assessment, but said it would be put online after the select committee had seen it.

# Huge under-delivery on 16 to 18 apprenticeships

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More than 520 providers under-delivered on their August 2012 16 to 18 apprenticeship allocations by a total of £241.5m.

Research by *FE Week* into figures released by the Education Funding Agency, shows 769 colleges and independent learning providers (ILPs) were initially going to be funded with £826.9m for the programme.

But 524 providers delivered less than their initial allocation by a total of £241.5m come the end of last academic year. And, while the funding allocation for all providers’ under-19 apprenticeships delivery had been revised down to £663.8m by July last year, the Skills Funding Agency still paid out £46.1m less than this.

It comes after *FE Week* reported in June last year how Simon Judge, the Department for Education’s finance and commercial director, wrote to the Education Select Committee to explain why the budget for under-19 apprenticeships in the current financial year had fallen nearly 20 per cent to £684.3m.

He said the removal of poor quality provision explained some of the under-spend, but increased competition from applicants aged 19-plus, funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, was also a factor.

And figures published before Christmas, in the statistical first release, showed the number of under-19 apprenticeship starts fell from 129,900 in 2011/12, to 114,500 in 2012/13. However, across the sector, 245 providers over-delivered on their August allocation by a total of £32.3m.

Nevertheless, the largest under-delivery was by Pearson in Practice Technology Limited, which was allocated £46.5m in August 2012 but was given £1.4m. A spokesperson said Pearson in Practice “closed down” a year ago, but declined to comment further.

The second largest under-delivery was by JTL, another ILP, which was allocated £17.4m for under-19 apprenticeships, but given £11.1m.

A spokesperson for JTL said: “Increased employer contributions [towards the cost of apprenticeships] in a sector that is only just starting to recover from economy-wide setbacks has meant that many employers

have been reluctant to take on a four year commitment.”

Newcastle College Group was originally allocated £7.3m, but received £4m — the biggest drop among colleges.

Chris Payne, group director of planning and performance, said: “Employers were not keen to take on younger apprentices due to the economic climate.

“In spite of these difficulties we revised our plans at the end of the first quarter, when we had a better indication of market conditions, and delivered at a similar level to the previous year.”

A government spokesperson said: “We are radically reforming apprenticeships so that they are more rigorous and responsive to the needs of employers. The small decline in 16 to 18 apprenticeship starts is due to quality improvement measures.”

A number of providers were omitted from *FE Week* research where they appeared solely in government figures for either August allocations or final funding levels.

For a link to the SFA figures mentioned, view this story on the *FE Week* website.

## Progress a problem

Two employer providers branded inadequate by Ofsted have been told they’re not making progress fast enough.

Inspectors raised concerns about the rate of improvement at G4S Care and Justice Services and Intercontinental Hotels Group Services Company (IHG) after they both got grade four ratings.

G4S, a government contractor which made headlines in 2012 when it failed to fulfil its contract to provide security at the London Olympic Games, was criticised over low success rates, and a monitoring inspection report said although action plans had been created, they were not working quickly enough.

The latest report said investment had been made in software designed to assess apprentices, but said it had not devised a comprehensive strategy for the delivery of functional skills.

IHG, which incorporates Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn among others, was originally criticised over the fact no apprentice had qualified since its training began in 2012. And the monitoring inspection raised concerns about a fall in its apprentices — from 49 in September to 40 at the time of the latest visit. Neither G4S nor IHG were available for comment.



## Editor's comment

### Another college crash

Another week, another college crashes to a grade four inspection result.

It would be wrong to ignore the fact we're seeing more outstanding colleges, but worryingly we're also seeing former grade ones falling to inadequate.

We've seen Liverpool and Stockport stumble, and Bristol became a grade four having previously been good. Now we have LeSoCo, too.

Is there a trend? It's certainly the case that in each college Ofsted saw extreme shortcomings on teaching, learning and assessment.

Perhaps this is the truly shocking part of all this — that any college should get an inadequate grading on what is essentially a bread-and-butter task.

But what exactly has been changing at these colleges? An obvious question surrounds size — are they too big? Or maybe there are growing challenges presented by the city environment?

Certainly London has an issue, as Ofsted conceded in *FE Week* last year, and the LeSoCo result adds further fuel to that fire.

It would be unfair to say Skills Minister Matthew Hancock is reluctant to act having created the office of the FE Commissioner (although to learn there's even a possibility David Collins may not be sent in to LeSoCo seems somewhat a dereliction of duty).

Investigation is needed to get under the bonnet to find out if there is a common, and hopefully rectifiable, denominator in all or just a few of these crashing colleges.

**Chris Henwood, editor**  
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## Correction

As far as mistakes go, a front page lead story that gave mention of a non-existent picture of Stockport College principal Stephen Carlisle and a page 4 spelling error of 'commisioner', are nothing to the possible omission of a sector-related damehood.

While all eyes were on West Nottingham College's Dame Asha Khemka, Dame Celia Hoyles escaped *FE Week* coverage.

The former National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics director and current Tribal chair was honoured for services to education.

It's debatable whether she is 'FE and skills enough' to have featured, especially in comparison to a principal dame, but regardless, she deserves warm congratulations for the honour and thanks for her contribution (to whatever extent) to the sector.

**Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*?**

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) with Corrections in the subject line.



## Action on minimum wage 'ridiculously late'

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The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has acted to ensure all jobs on its vacancy matching website conform to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) — more than three months after it rose three pence to £2.68.

Companies had been advertising for apprenticeships that, according to the adverts, would have paid below the NMW.

But last month NAS announced a change in the way its website works, eventually banning organisations from reopening and simply extending vacancies. They will now have to check new adverts before posting.

An *FE Week* investigation could not find any companies currently advertising apprenticeships below the minimum wage through the site, and the improvement has been welcomed.

But the delay in action from NAS has been criticised.

Joe Vinson, National Union of Students' vice president for FE, said: "These changes are certainly welcome, but it is ridiculous that it took three months for the government to clamp down."

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA), which runs NAS, said it had been in contact with employers regularly since the rise in the NMW went ahead.

An SFA spokesperson said: "Since the increase in NMW on October 1, 2013, we have been working with employers and providers to ensure that all vacancies posted after this date to Apprenticeship vacancies (Av) reflect the new rate.

"We also communicated this change to providers before and after the increase came into force, and continue to issue reminders, to ensure that all providers are aware of the changes.

"We also implemented a change to our Av system to ensure vacancies can only be posted at the NMW or above."

In October, *FE Week* revealed how some adverts on the government's apprenticeship vacancies (Av) website — including positions with sandwich shop Subway and other large firms — had not been adjusted to offer the new minimum rate for apprentices, which rose at the start of the month.

In many cases the previous minimum wage amount of £2.65 per hour was offered because at the time companies were able to simply extend or replicate existing vacancies advertised instead of creating new ones.

The problem had persisted despite a letter to advertisers in November asking them to be clearer about the wage and weekly working hours they were offering to make it easier for the service to check adverts.

Mr Vinson said: "It was scandalous that

companies offering apprenticeships were advertising below the NMW.

"Apprenticeships should offer an opportunity to gain valuable skills and an insight into the reality of the workplace, as well as enabling you to study for qualifications to further your future.

"However, there needs to be some serious thought about how people will be attracted to taking up an apprenticeship when wages are just £2.68 an-hour."

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Changes in the way that apprentice jobs can be advertised may go part of the way towards solving problems with illegal non-payment of the minimum wage, but the move is not enough on its own.

"In the coming year there needs to be a strong focus on improving the quality of apprenticeships, and that must include ensuring they are properly paid."

But in a message to users sent on December 18, the SFA said: "Since October, there have been ongoing issues with apprenticeship vacancies advertised below the current NMW of £2.68 per hour.

"Because of this, we have made changes to the way Av operates. From Friday, December 13, providers are no longer able to reopen or extend vacancies; instead, they must clone and check the vacancy before submitting for approval."

Comments

### Nothing like a damehood for Asha

Many congratulations to Asha [Khemka], Lyndsey [Whiterod] and all those honoured. Great performance for FE too! Happy New Year everybody.

Mike Hopkins

Call me carping — I am and some of you might — but here again, recognition skewed in favour of executives and senior managers.

What about the maingrade teachers and curriculum managers who keep the show going in very adverse circumstances, while

assorted (pantomime) dames and knights draw their huge salaries?

What about the union branch officers who put in hours of additional unpaid time looking after colleagues and campaigning to defend the further education system?

John Germain

[@IFL\\_Members](#)

Congratulations to the teachers, managers and leaders from further education on the 2014 honours list

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FE Week profile

# Christine Doubleday ~ her story

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The deputy executive director of the 157 Group talks to FE Week

The importance of education as a means to getting on in life was instilled into Christine Doubleday by her parents who both left school when they were 13.

She grew up on a huge council estate in Wakefield, Yorkshire, in a catholic, working class family with her brothers Martin, now aged 60, Paul, 56, and John, who died in 1999 at the age of 35.

Her father, Jack, worked on the railways as a goods guard and was secretary of the local branch of the National Union of Railwaymen.

“He started going to literacy classes through the union. He got to the point where he could have gone to the trade union college in Oxford, but he didn’t go because he wouldn’t have left the family,” she says.

“However, while my dad was really proud of being working class, he and my mum, Pat, had an old fashioned view held by many people from their background that education gave the kids a chance to get up and out.”

Doubleday, 58, recalls how her father was prepared to take drastic action when he feared his children were being distracted from their studies.

“My dad was always telling us: ‘If you don’t do your homework, the telly will go back to Radio Rental’,” she says.

“As kids, we didn’t believe him, but I came home one day when I must have been about 11 and it had gone. It never came back until after I had done my O-levels.”

Doubleday went on to get eight O-levels and four A-levels and was offered a place studying medieval history at Leicester University.

But, she says: “I went a bit weird when I was 17. I discovered boys and music and decided I wanted to go to the university of life instead.

“I went to work in a hotel in Switzerland for about six months. When I came back to England, I went to visit a friend at Oxford University and never came back.”

She became involved with student politics while visiting a friend at Pembroke College, Oxford, joining in protests supporting a campaign for a central students’ union for the entire university.

“We occupied the building where they took their exams. I seem to remember sleeping on the corridor floor for about two nights, before being removed by the university police,” explains Doubleday. “I ended up living in Pembroke College for a whole term in 1973, even though I wasn’t a student there.

“It was the first time I had experienced southern middle-class politeness. I thought I would get away with it for as long as I could.

“In Wakefield that would have been about five minutes, but no-one ever questioned why I was there — which was funny because it was an all-male college.”

One of the middle-class students she met, Miles Doubleday, became her husband for 23 years, before they divorced in the late 1990s.

They had three children, Tim, 35, Clare, 33,

and Katie, 31.

She worked at a bakery, before marrying aged 20 and doing a social studies degree at Oxford Polytechnic, which she completed shortly before having her first baby, aged 23.

She set out on her career in education in the early 1980s, teaching adult literacy in colleges, through local authority-run classes, and with the Workers’ Education Association.

She was then thrilled to be one of the first people in Britain to be trained by American feminist icon Anne Dickson to give assertiveness training to women.

She said: “I used to get women turning up with badminton rackets and yoga mats because that’s what they told their husbands they were doing. But the idea was to give women the confidence to get on in their careers.”

Doubleday secured her first managerial post in 1989, as regional organiser for community education for Cumnor and Kennington, in Oxfordshire.

She says: “It was a case of running things like badminton and sugarcraft classes to pay for more of the things I really wanted to do, like adult literacy and numeracy classes and assertiveness training.”

“We occupied the building where they took their exams. I seem to remember sleeping on the corridor floor for about two nights, before being removed by the university police,”

Between 1992 and 1997, Doubleday also travelled regularly to Russia to train trade unionists how to recruit in the post-communist era.

She says: “It wasn’t very fashionable to be in a union out there at that time. It was quite funny because I would be trying to teach these older people, who had been part of the communist regime, and their approach was very much ‘you must join’, which wasn’t really how we did things.”

It was also during this period that she com-



Inset: Christine with her brothers Paul (back left), Martin and baby John

pleted a masters degree which changed her approach to FE.

She says: “I had this notion you shouldn’t accredit adult education, following the liberal idea of education for education’s sake.

“I did my thesis on the idea that accreditation has no place in adult education, but completely disproved this notion through my research — all the adults I spoke to really liked having a qualification to show for their studies.”

Doubleday took this on board when she set up the Oxfordshire Open College Network in 1991. She says: “We would accredit curricula, for example for special needs and access to HE courses.

“Some of the tutors hated it, but there was me saying: ‘You have to have aims. You have to have an outcome’.”

Doubleday had a difficult period in the late 1990s. She left FE for a few years, taking a post graduate diploma in careers guidance, having divorced and suffered the heartache of her brother committing suicide. “Being bereaved by suicide when there is no explanation and no

clue it is coming leaves not only a massive gap, but also confusion,” she says.

“I never did find out and I guess I never will, but have gradually let go and learned to simply grieve.”

Doubleday emerged from this dark period by 2001, when she returned to FE as director of research for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

She became acting director for two years from 2003 and permanent area director for Stoke and Staffordshire LSC in 2006.

She says: “I really loved that job, but after Gordon Brown created two separate departments for our sector, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education, it was obvious the power of the local LSC offices had gone, as the very notion of a council for both learning and skills no longer applied.

“I moved briefly to the LSC’s national office in 2010, but was looking to move on.

“I kept bumping into Lynne Sedgmore [executive director of the 157 Group] at meetings. She was one of those people who made me think ‘that’s where it’s going to happen’ and I was lucky enough to be able to move to the 157 Group in 2011.”

Doubleday, who still lives in Oxford, started off as shared services manager and became deputy executive director in 2012.

She says: “I love it. Education is so important and FE is the cog in the middle that turns everything else.

“To have a job that helps turn that cog a little bit just makes me think ‘what a bloody privilege’.”

It’s a personal thing

**What’s your favourite book:**  
The Bone People, by Keri Hulme

**What’s your pet hate:**  
Meanness

**What did you want to be when you grew up?**  
The person on the rail platform who waves the flag and blows the whistle to say the train can go

**What do you do to switch off from work?**  
I have been learning to be a silversmith through FE courses for the last three years and can make my own jewellery. I also sing with my local choral society

**If you could invite anyone, living or dead, to a dinner party, who would it be?**  
Eddie Izzard, [scientist] Brian Cox, pianist Helen Grimaud and my brother, Paul



How I became

## better equipped to stay the course in education

Further and higher education is meant to be a challenge. Fortunately I received funding to take on a personal mentor, and through Randstad Student Support I found Anna. She's a specialist mental health mentor and I cannot tell you how much she's helped me.

She motivates me, organises me and supports me, particularly with overcoming my anxiety. She also helps me apply myself to my coursework, quite firmly sometimes. But we get on so well and we've established a real partnership.

Recently I sat my first exam at home and I do not think I could have done that without Anna's support. I'm really proud to have achieved that and whilst I know it's just the first step I now feel more confident about the journey ahead knowing Anna's with me every step of the way.

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Sophie Moss  
Student

Recommended by You

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# Governors called to account for ‘weak’ learning provision



The spotlight of Ofsted attention shone for the first time on prison education with the watchdog's latest annual report — and it didn't make for positive reading. Alexandra Marks looks at what's going wrong behind locked doors.

It was a challenging year for prison education that saw the new Offender Learning and Skills Service contract (OLASS 4) affect key

skills, arts and distance learning.

Regime changes within many prisons in 2013 also caused many prisoners to spend less time doing activities, and the government announced proposals for new types of institutions such as resettlement and super prisons.

**“Accountability for the quality of learning provision is weak, but can be addressed by greater leadership from prison governors and senior staff”**

In its annual speech, Ofsted cast its eye over prison education for the first time. Matthew Coffey, the education watchdog's director of FE and skills, said that only 35 per cent of prison education departments were judged to be “good”, which would cause a “national outcry” had the figures applied to schools.

After prison inspection results showed that the quality and quantity of purposeful activity in prisons was the worst for six years,

Ofsted's annual report, revealed that prison learning came bottom in the whole FE sector.

Is that surprising, you might think? After all, why should prisoners receive a standard of learning better or equivalent to that in the community?

The answer is that this issue affects us all. Reoffending rates are currently 58.5 per cent for people serving sentences of less than a year, the annual cost of the crime committed by former prisoners is up to £13bn, yet £37,648 per year per prisoner has been spent on their custody. The Chief Inspector of Prisons and the Chief Inspector of Probation said only last month that efforts to stop reoffending are not working.

The Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA), formed by 17 expert member organisations to improve learning in prison. The group was established by the charity Prisoners Education Trust in November 2012 and members include the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG), the Institute for Learning, Prison Radio Association, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers and Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR).

The PLA's new report, Smart Rehabilitation, evidences its vision of putting learning at the heart of rehabilitation in prisons, and includes recommendations for achieving it.

Accountability for the quality of learning provision is weak, but can be addressed by greater leadership from prison governors and senior staff to prioritise a wide range of learn-

ing, encompassing everything from relationship skills to higher education.

As insufficient numbers of prisoners are actually undertaking any form of education, we would like to see a prison culture that engages people with interesting, personalised and inclusive learning plans.

Once a prisoner begins learning, mechanisms in prison must enable them to progress and achieve their true potential. Communal areas, such as education departments, can be hotspots for tension in a prison and therefore staff must be supported in behaviour management to make classrooms safer for teachers and learners alike.

Beyond this, teachers should be supported to develop professionally. Achieving excellence requires a commitment from prison staff, education providers and volunteers.

We are concerned that the Ministry of Justice's plans for transforming rehabilitation in 2014 will not work unless prisoners are supported to use their time constructively to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that will enable them to play a positive role in society.

Our report offers practical guidance for both prisons and the UK Government's efforts to become more joined up, ensuring that prisoners have a successful learning journey throughout their time in custody and after release and thus, in turn, reducing reoffending.

*Alexandra Marks, Prisoner Learning Alliance chair*

## Keeping the industry in mind on apprenticeships



As employers take greater ownership of the skills agenda, it's important to remember the qualifications of apprentices remain relevant to the sector — not just their boss's immediate workplace needs, says Scott Waddington.

Privately-educated pupils have been warned by Girls' School Association president Hilary French they can no longer afford to be ‘sniffy’ about apprenticeships, while MI5 and MI6 are set to recruit up to 100 apprentices in the coming year.

Chancellor George Osborne also declared recently that 20,000 new apprenticeships were to be funded over the course of the next year, and as a whole the public perception of apprentice-

ships has been cast in a whole new light.

At government level there has never been a greater focus on increasing the number, range and quality of apprenticeships on offer, and young talent in the UK is becoming increasingly attracted to vocational.

So as its popularity continues to rise, can the apprenticeship truly begin to rival its academic counterparts?

Industry chiefs have long maintained vocational qualifications can help address those challenges currently faced by the UK economy, and we do seem to be witnessing the first shift in perceptions required to make this a reality.

Ever more employers and educationalists are recognising the merits vocational qualifications can bring to both the organisation and the individual, while statements like those from Girls' School Association President Ms French would support the notion that this is beginning to play out at grass roots level too.

As more and more prestigious organisations including GCHQ look to vocational pathways to fulfil their own skills gaps, both now and in the future, the profile of apprenticeships is no doubt set to rise further in 2014 and beyond as a result.

This is partly due to the ongoing drive to create greater investment incentives in apprenticeship training from the employer's perspective, and MI5 will surely be great ambassadors in encouraging others to engage in similar schemes.

But there is another factor that must be

taken into account during the transition, and that is the need for ongoing collaboration between employers and government to ensure the quality of training is maintained throughout this process.

**“Might this restrict the scope of the training and in turn the ability of the trainee to work elsewhere in their field, should they wish to?”**

Employers and training providers alike must make sure qualifications remain rigorous and comprehensive in relation to the learner's chosen field, and are not there simply to meet the particular requirements of a candidate's employer.

As the popularity of alternative apprenticeship formats increases, this must not get lost in the transition.

If the sole focus is on the company involved, might this restrict the scope of the training and in turn the ability of the trainee to work elsewhere in their field, should they wish to?

Apprenticeships must indeed be held in higher esteem and preserving their quality and scope will prove essential if we are to build on the prestige created in association with the likes of GCHQ.

A balanced and continuous exchange between employer and training provider can only support the rising profile of apprenticeships further and support parity of regard between vocational and academic qualifications moving forward.

In Wales, this is achieved through the stringent regulation of providers operating collaboratively to ensure qualifications available are both industry relevant, and provide young people with as comprehensive and wide a skillset as possible.

The UK Commission's 2012 Employer Perspectives Survey shows us that employers in Wales have the highest uptake of vocational qualifications out of all the four home nations, but there is no room for complacency yet.

The expansion of opportunities for employers to recruit young people through apprenticeships is indeed transforming the way in which businesses are acquiring and developing the skills they need.

This must, however, be supported by a collaborative approach and a unified mindset — both from the employer's and the learner's perspective.

*Scott Waddington, Wales commissioner for UK Commission for Employment and Skills, and chief executive of SA Brain*



## FE Week experts

# Who benefits from a secretive commissioner set-up?



**The sight of Ofsted inspectors is not the only thing to strike fear into the heart of principals at poorly-performing colleges now the FE Commissioner is in town. But while such principals rightly face a grilling, the rest of the sector should be able to learn from the mistakes of others and the experience of the commissioner, says Jayne Stigger.**

Despite many calls for better early warning signals to allow early and pre-emptive interventions in FE, we now have a commissioner, David Collins, who investigates after the fact, using strong measures to ensure improvement.

**“Key judgements following a visit by the commissioner, leading to ‘administered status’ and/or ‘recommendations’ must be shared”**

In his own book, *A Survival Guide for College Managers and Leaders*, published in 2006, he wrote: “Institutions that are not so good work in isolation, performing poorly in a number of areas ... there remains a considerable range of performance levels across the sector, ... linked to the quality of the leadership and management that the college possesses.”

Is this a clear statement on his opinion of the causes of inadequate performance in FE?

Dr Collins has investigated at least four colleges since his appointment, leading to administered status at Stockport and K College, and recommendations for Bristol and Liverpool.

Yet, he does not seem to have visited Coventry, where all 16 outcomes in the main findings were inadequate, following on from two poor inspection results and overseen by a principal of 16 years’ tenure.

Are those four colleges guilty of ‘working in isolation, poorly performing in a number of areas’, or really worse than Coventry, particularly when ‘protecting learners’ interests is the primary purpose of intervention’ is the prime consideration?

Truth is, we don’t know. Currently, the commissioner’s findings are not made public, nor do we know whether that situation will change.

My view and that of many in the sector is that it should change; we need to know.

No one is suggesting that highly sensitive material be made public, but the key judgements following a visit by the commissioner, leading to ‘administered status’ and/or ‘recommendations’ must be shared with other providers.

The rules we play by are complex and as Dr Collins writes, we do operate in ‘a choppy sea of ever-changing government policies’.

If colleges are to respond to these environmental conditions, they can only benefit from full and frank sharing of information, so, why the secrecy and who benefits from it?

Not us. How can we improve, change and adapt if we don’t know the new rules?

Is the secrecy because it highlights perpetual weaknesses in the provider which Ofsted should have identified and acted on, but did not?

Or is it that the provider has simply not complied with Ofsted, departmental or Skills Funding Agency requirements?

Or maybe the reasons are not sufficiently strong to justify the response of the commissioner?

Swimming blind, in a ‘choppy sea’, is no way to run a sector.

Obfuscating the underlying concerns for the commissioner’s visit and particularly his recommendations for improvement, are against the very open nature of FE, which is collaborative, inclusive and by our very nature dedicated to continuously improving our delivery for the benefit of our learners, local communities and national economy.

Simply put, we need to know.

This information, this judgement, this determination of our status cannot be made in a ‘secret court’. These should not be closed material procedures, where secret intelligence can be introduced but will only be seen by the judge and special advocates.

These decisions are made, but we have no counsel to weigh the evidence.

As yet, there has been no college dissolution, but it is a possibility we face. There is a danger that these actions come to be viewed as politically punitive rather than educationally corrective.

If the commissioner feels it is necessary to act, then we should have feedback on why and how.

We do not doubt his knowledge and integrity, only asking that it is shared, widely, for the benefit of the whole sector.

Colleges are delivering what government has asked of them, but if the goal posts are changing, we should be told.

If there is no agenda other than clear improvement and backing for FE, then there can be no justification for withholding this information from the very sector it is purported to support.

*Jayne Stigger, head of maths and science (HE) at North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot)*

# From inadequate to good in little more than a year



**Just over a year ago, South Worcestershire College was deemed by Ofsted to be inadequate. A host of measures, including a possible merger, were subsequently set in motion before Ofsted inspectors revisited and handed out a new, good grading, explains Viv Gillespie.**

We were graded as good in our Ofsted inspection report in early December having been graded as inadequate in October the previous year. This represents the fastest turnaround from a grade four to grade two.

The grade four inspection report found, in particular, failings in leadership and management and in poor outcomes for students.

Having arrived as interim principal in January 2013 it was clear that we had to address quality improvement as quickly as possible to result in improved outcomes for learners.

I was aware that the outcomes for 2012-2013 would be the only ones taken into account for the re-inspection.

This meant that a lot of new systems, and approaches to teaching and learning had to be introduced very quickly.

Building the confidence of staff and the whole leadership was essential as everyone was shocked by the inadequate result, which had not been anticipated.

I was also aware that Ofsted was likely to look at how well the 16 to 19 study programme had been introduced, so planning was started very early for its implementation.

A robust and rigorous plan was put in place, with crucial key information enabling our governors to monitor and challenge the progress.

The first priority was about raising expectations and ambition for the college.

The second was an improved set of processes, measures and data. Milestones judged effective progress against areas of improvement and flagged-up any ‘early danger’ signs.

For example, the expansion and systematic monitoring of ‘learners at risk’ really helped to improve retention and achievement.

The third area was teaching, learning and assessment. We designed a set of ‘prompt cards’ for staff to help simplify the key ‘must-haves’. For example, ‘ways to embed equality and diversity’.

Within the year, long course success rates rose to 87.5 per cent and will position us within the top results for 2012/13.

High grades also improved dramatically — a reflection of the improved ambition and aspiration of students and of the staff who have enabled these achievements.

The improvement activities were underpinned by staff development, coaching, transference of good practice and the use of some good external support.

As a small college, resources are very limited and we were in no position to throw money at the problems.

While of course wanting to learn from external best practice, it was up to us to take responsibility and enable change across the organisation.

It is also fairly unusual for a college in the process of recovery from a grade four to start to undergo its own options review process.

**“Everyone was shocked by the inadequate result, which had not been anticipated”**

We are mid-way through the process of reviewing options to ascertain a sustainable future for the college.

I was asked to stay on by governors in order to see the options process through to a successful conclusion.

I have been very aware that the complex project must not divert attention from our core business of delivering high-quality education and training.

It is an absolute credit to staff that they have worked so hard to bring about the college’s Ofsted good grading while being in a period of such uncertainty about the future.

The Ofsted report is very complimentary about the improvements made and their positive impact on learners.

I am pleased that Ofsted recognised in the report that staff morale, confidence and self-esteem are high and are reflected in the high level of support they provide to students and apprentices in a safe and caring environment.

The report also stressed the focus that the college gives on our students gaining good employability skills and accessing relevant employment.

*Viv Gillespie, interim principal, South Worcestershire College*



# FE Week campus round-up

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Hayley Marks and Claire Russell preparing costumes for the show

## Staying cool for ice skating show

Students kept their cool as they helped ensure a major ice skating production was a big success.

New College Nottingham hospitality management students Hayley Marks, aged 24, and Claire Russell, 23, helped plan the event at the National Ice Centre.

It featured 200 skating stars dancing to music from the 1930s to the present day and

attracted an audience of more than 1,700 people.

Hayley said: "I really enjoyed the experience of planning and running an event, I have learnt so much."

Students also got involved backstage, with theatrical, special effects, hair and media make-up students designing and applying the make-up for 200 performers.



Courtney Finch with some of her prizes

## Fashion student has grand designs on laptop prize

A fashion student is feeling bright as a button after winning a laptop for simply enrolling on her course.

Wigan and Leigh student Courtney Finch, aged 16, entered the college's Push the Button competition when she visited it for an open day and signed up for her level three fashion course back in February.

The competition was open to all applicants

who applied to study on a full-time course at Wigan and Leigh College for 2013/14 study.

Courtney said: "I was really shocked and excited when the college told me I'd won, as I really didn't expect it would be me. I can't wait to use my prize."

Courtney also won an iPad, £50 iTunes voucher and £100 to spend in the college.



Animation students Anthony Alvisse, Theo Morgan, both 17, Conor Sultana, 18, and Charlie Lewis, 20

## Designs brought to life through e-cards

Animation students brought children's card designs to life for a good cause.

The original cards were created, through a competition run by Barnardo's children's charity, by youngsters using paint, pencils and even pasta.

Students from Barking and Dagenham College then transformed them into virtual, animated e-cards.

Theo Morgan said: "We've been able to

experience first-hand what it's like getting a brief from the client, working to that brief and producing an end-product that the client is really pleased with.

"I've really enjoyed the project and hope that the e-cards can help Barnardo's raise lots of money. It's a great charity."

Visit [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk) to view and send the e-cards.

## Broadcasters show they're tuned in

Tuning into college life will soon be easy after a group of students won £5,000 of funding to commercialise their radio station.

The music business students from Northbrook College, Worthing, will use the money to buy equipment and an FM licence to broadcast on the airwaves.

Students Simba Shangare, Becca Munn and Chloe Ayres presented their pitch for the funding to the National Association of College and University Entrepreneurs, competing against 20 other colleges and universities at the Google campus in London.

They were named best student pitch for the innovativeness and content of their pitch.

Lecturer Mike Pailthorpe said: "It was thrilling to watch our students. They only had a short time to do the research and work on their presentations."



Simba Shangare, aged 20, Becca Munn, 19, and Chloe Ayres, 18

Send your stories with pictures to [campus@feweek.co.uk](mailto:campus@feweek.co.uk) including names, ages and course of students where applicable





Megan Luck with her camera

## Volunteering helps Megan see bigger picture

A budding photographer from Cadbury College is seeing the bigger picture after working with the National Trust.

Megan Luck, aged 17, from Redditch, is studying A-levels at the sixth form college and also volunteers for the National Trust's OakMobile project.

The OakMobile, a transportable theatrical experience, is touring Birmingham's parks with the aim of encouraging members of

the public to share stories about their own favourite places while learning about the trust.

She has been photographing people taking part and her pictures have been used on the trust's website.

She said: "It's been great to work with the team. I've been able to practise different techniques and experience what it's like working with the public."



Adham Mughal receiving his prize from Frances Fielding, economic development officer at Rochdale Council

## Designs on town team's new shop sign

Graphic design students from Hopwood Hall College were challenged to create a new logo for the Middleton Town Team.

The team recently opened a shop which local residents and visitors can visit to pick up information on events, local businesses, and find out more about the history of Middleton, near Rochdale, Lancashire.

Hopwood Hall students were challenged through a competition to design the new logo.

Winner Adham Mughal, aged 18, saw his design used on the shop front.

He said: "It was a great opportunity to be able to work on this live project and I was very pleased to know that I had produced the winning design. I will be able to add this to my portfolio."

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# FE Week campus round-up

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## Cutting back on unqualified hairdressers



Sage Khan, Newham College hairdressing commercial training manager with local salon owner and lecturer Patrick Phipps

Newham College is backing a campaign by hairdressing industry experts to boost professionalism in the sector in East London.

The college's hair and beauty lecturers are supporting the Hairdressing Council's bid to encourage stylists in the area to become state-registered.

It is hoped this will drive up standards by ensuring all working hairdressers and barbers are properly qualified.

Sage Khan, the college's hairdressing commercial training manager, said: "We want to become a model for how standards can be raised locally.

"We're keen to demonstrate we are serious about the profession and we can do that by registering our lecturers and students. We'll encourage our students to talk to their employers and convince them of the benefits of registration too."



The award-winning staff from Bradford College

## Virtual classroom wins innovation award

A forward-looking college was awarded for its innovative use of a virtual classroom to teach pharmaceutical science.

Bradford College was announced as a winner for the first innovation awards, run by the Innovation Institute, in the best example of innovation in a science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) course or training programme category.

The institution was recognised for its

BTEC level three diploma in pharmaceutical science course, which runs lessons in a virtual classroom.

Students are able to log in for sessions, to be greeted by a tutor waiting to take them through the lesson. They can also communicate with each other online.

Anita Lall, programme manager for science and maths, said: "I am so proud of the staff and their innovative approach to education and training."

## Leading the fight against cyber bullies



Will Britton, Jonathan Hofgartner, and Andy Girling

Efforts by a college to promote e-safety and fight back against cyber bullies were shared online during a national webinar.

Weston College in North Somerset is running a campaign aimed at educating its students in areas such as protecting their reputations online, controlling privacy settings and exposing cyber bullying.

Jonathan Hofgartner, technology and library services team leader, was invited to

talk about the initiative during a webinar with colleges across Britain organised by Jisc, a national organisation that promotes digital technologies for education.

Presentations were also made by college staff members Andy Girling and Will Britton.

Ben McConkey, strategic lead for inclusive practice, said: "It was extremely useful to be able to share what we've done. There was a lot of interest in our work during the question-and-answer session."



Professor Russell Deacon with a copy of Politics UK

## Teacher explains the politics of devolution

When it comes to talking politics Coleg Gwent students now have the advantage of speaking directly to one of the authors of a best-selling politics textbook.

Professor Russell Deacon, who teaches A-level government and politics at the Welsh college, recently had a chapter on devolution published in the eighth edition of Politics UK.

The book provides students with an introduction to British politics at A-level and

undergraduate level.

Professor Deacon's chapter examines the way politics in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland has changed over the last 15 years.

He said: "When I first started writing on devolution, politics outside of England was just evolving. Over the past few years it has taken off at a rapid pace.

"This latest chapter on devolution brings students right up to date."

Send your stories with pictures to [campus@feweek.co.uk](mailto:campus@feweek.co.uk) including names, ages and course of students where applicable



# Return to education leads to life-changing dyslexia diagnosis

Mature student Billy Plimbley recalled most of his teachers thought he was either “thick” or simply not paying attention at school. It was only after he enrolled South Leicestershire College more than 30 years later that he discovered his problems had been caused by dyslexia, writes Paul Offord.

Reading blue letters against a black background might sound like a headache-inducing task to most, but for 51-year-old Billy Plimbley it has proved his ticket to an English education.

Billy, from South Wigston, in the Midlands, registered for a level one English functional skills course at nearby South Leicestershire College in 2012.

Despite being a capable student, lecturer Karen Gregson noticed the dad-of-two found reading difficult.

“She saw there was a problem,” said former bus driver Billy.

“She offered to carry out some tests and found that I was dyslexic. Then she set about finding what help I needed.

“It was taking me an awful long time to read. They tried different coloured transparent screens for me to read through.

“It turned out I can read best when there are black letters on a blue background.”

He went on to pass level one easily and then level two within a year.

College bosses were so impressed with his progress that they named him English student of the year at the recent South Leicestershire College student star

awards.

He said: “Now I would like to eventually do a degree and go on to teach people with similar problems to myself in a college.”

He added: “Dyslexia was pretty much unheard of when I left school in 1978. I scraped through most of my CSEs with the lowest possible pass marks and was always playing catch-up. The teachers would say I wasn’t listening or paying attention, or that I was deliberately being thick.”

Mrs Gregson said: “Billy had a bad time at school and would assume he couldn’t do things at the start. “But I noticed that while Billy answered questions very well, he was struggling to read. There was obviously a discrepancy there, so we did some tests on him.”

She added: “He grew and grew in confidence after that and was so enthusiastic, which inspired everyone else in his classes to do the best they could too.”

Billy hardly read any novels before he was diagnosed, but now places his blue transparent screen over the pages to help him understand what’s on the pages.

He said: “I used to read a bit at school but gave up when I started work. Now my nose is hardly ever out of a book.”

Billy, who is father to Kyle, 21, and Melissa, 22, spent his working life in a variety of jobs in the catering sector, as a builder’s labourer, and driving buses.

He said: “I was made redundant as a bus driver and there were no vacancies around at the time. I decided I was going to use my time off productively and try and prove everyone



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Marion Plant, principal of South Leicestershire College, and Billy Plimbley after he was given the student of the year award Inset: Billy the Coventry schoolboy, in 1973

who said I was thick wrong by going back to college.

“It has done me such a lot of good to find

out I’m dyslexic and that’s the reason why I struggled to read and write. Now it’s hard to believe I’m student of the year.”

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who’s new and who’s leaving

Health, fitness and wellbeing awarding organisation CYQ (Central YMCA Qualifications) has a new interim head.

Sarah Edmonds (pictured left) has moved up from her role as lead external quality assurer at the subsidiary operation of Central YMCA, which marked its 15th anniversary last year.

She takes the helm following CYQ’s recent acquisition of training organisation YMCA Training.

“I look forward to ensuring CYQ’s continued success, adding and increasing our presence internationally with both our qualifications and strategic partnerships,” said Mrs Edmonds.

“With our level three diplomas

being accepted into schools’ performance tables from September 2014, and the growth in our apprenticeships offer, the focus on quality will remain a key priority, which I am confident we can continue to deliver.”

Rosi Prescott, chief executive of Central YMCA, said: “Sarah is taking up this key role at an exciting

and important time for the

organisation as our portfolio continues to grow, highlighted by our recent acquisition of YMCA Training and CYQ’s recent appointment as the accrediting body for the international awarding body ICREPS [International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals].”

Meanwhile, Colchester Institute

principal Danny Clough (pictured right) is retiring from the North Essex college after 12 years at the top.

A college spokesperson said: “The Colchester Institute Corporation Board extends its thanks to Danny for his service to Colchester Institute.

“During his time in charge he has overseen substantial changes, including the merger of The College at Braintree, the moving of the degree awarding body to the University of Essex, and the continuing development to the college’s buildings on all sites to improve the learner experience.

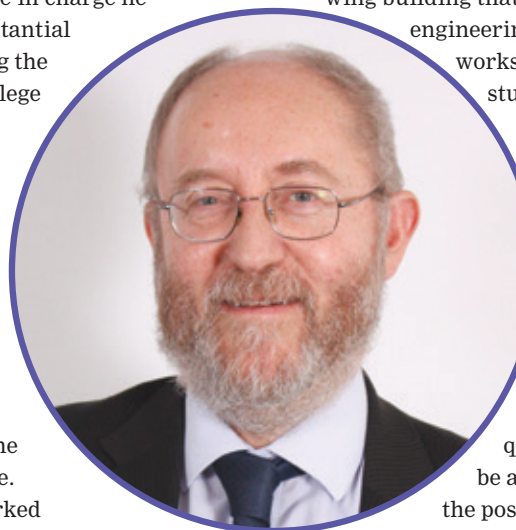
“Danny has worked in the education sector for

more than 30 years as both lecturer, vice principal and principal at various further and higher education establishments, including Dunstable College.

“Colchester Institute has seen a steady development of its facilities whilst under Danny’s leadership, such as the new west wing building that houses state of the art engineering and construction workshops as well as dance studios and music rooms.

“Furthermore, the higher education centre, which opened in 2012, provides greater provision for the college’s degree level students.”

Alison Andreas, vice principal for quality and support, will be acting principal until the post is advertised and filled.



If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your college or training provider, please let us know by emailing [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk)



# Jobs



**Director of MIS and Funding**  
**£45k plus PRP**  
**Location: Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham**

## Why Choose Learning Curve?

- National Training Provider
- SFA & EFA Direct Contract Holder
- Grade 2 Ofsted Provider
- 50,000 learners enrolled in 12/13
- £23m of SFA/EFA funded provision
- Overall success rate of 93%

We are looking for a proven senior manager and experienced MIS/Funding professional with excellent communication, organisational, problem solving, IT and analytical skills. You will play a pivotal role in supporting our developments by leading a small ambitious team that deliver high quality data management across 16-18, adult learners and work based funding streams.

You will also lead on all data management with our College partners to monitor performance against agreed funding and performance targets. As an experienced Senior Manager, you will have the skills to build on these existing College relationships and identify new partnership opportunities, reporting directly to the Finance Director.

You will need a detailed understanding of the Individual Learning Record (ILR), Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS) and Funding Information System (FIS). You will have detailed knowledge of SFA/EFA funding and audit regulations to ensure full compliance when reporting to regulatory bodies and subcontract partners. You should have experience of the data management and audit requirements for our extensive subcontract provision with FE colleges.

The ability to work flexibly and accurately to tight timescales is essential.

### Interested in working at Learning Curve?

If your ambition to succeed matches ours, we would like to hear from you. Please send your CV and covering letter to [HR@learning-curve.co.uk](mailto:HR@learning-curve.co.uk) by **20th January 2014**. Should you wish to discuss this opportunity further, please contact **Terry Jeffrey** on **07770 434940** to arrange an informal discussion with a member of the Senior Management Team.

[www.learning-curve.co.uk](http://www.learning-curve.co.uk)

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### Data Architect

£36,090 - £39,099 pa depending on experience • East Ham

Students come to us because of our superb resources and high-quality teaching. Employers turn to us for the kind of leading-edge vocational training which gives them a competitive edge. In fact, Newham College is a vibrant hub, helping to transform the prospects of individuals and organisations across East London.

You will assist in the design, development and maintenance of reports within EBS (the college student management system), the college data warehouse and the college dashboard. You will also design, develop and maintain data reports based on other sources such as Pro-Achieve, Pro-Monitor and FIS, and provide guidance for their interpretation.

With good literacy and numeracy skills, you will have previous experience in a similar role, or hold a professional qualification. You will be expert in developing advanced reports in Reporting Services, MS Access and MS Excel and have experience in the design, testing, implementation and their review.

Competent in Visual Basic, T-SQL and Oracle SQL, you will have a good knowledge of the Microsoft Business Intelligent Suite of Applications. Previous experience gained in the FE sector with knowledge of its data reporting requirements would be ideal. Ref: 4177.

This position is subject to DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service, previously known as CRB) clearance. The College is committed to safeguarding and promotes the welfare of all learners and expects all staff to share this commitment. The College is an equal opportunities employer.

Please apply via the recruitment portal at [www.newham.ac.uk](http://www.newham.ac.uk)

Closing date: 27 January 2014.



To advertise  
with us call  
**Hannah  
Smith**  
on

**020 81234 778**





## DIRECTOR OF STOCKTON RIVERSIDE COLLEGE (BEDE)

Stockton Riverside College has ambitious plans



We have a newly-established Senior Leadership Team with the drive and commitment to take the College to new heights. We have made rapid progress and we want to maintain this impetus to deliver outstanding learning opportunities to our local community.

Our recently built sixth form provision is located in Billingham, approximately six miles away from the main College site. These stunning facilities provide an exciting and stimulating environment for our young people. They provide a wonderful opportunity to develop provision to further meet the needs of learners.

We therefore wish to appoint an outstanding individual to grow the education provision in Billingham and the surrounding area.

This is a role for someone prepared to work hard to make a difference to the lives of young people. In return for your commitment, leadership skills, ability to think creatively and desire to lead Stockton Riverside College (Bede) to higher standards of performance, you will receive the full support of the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.

We encourage potential applicants to contact our Deputy Principal, Mick Hickey to discuss the post in more detail. Please arrange an appropriate time by emailing him: [mick.hickey@stockton.ac.uk](mailto:mick.hickey@stockton.ac.uk)

Further details of the post, including the job description, person specification and application form are available on our college website [www.stockton.ac.uk/inspire](http://www.stockton.ac.uk/inspire)

**The closing date for applications is noon on Monday 27 January 2014.**

**Interviews will be held on 13-14 February 2014**



[www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk](http://www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk)

## AN OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR AN EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUAL...

**Assistant Principal: 14-19  
c£60,000**

Kirklees College is a large successful FE college, operating across seven vocational centres and 40 community based centres across Huddersfield and Dewsbury.

With an income of £45million we offer a broad curriculum to 21,000 students.

We are seeking to appoint a strong, innovative leader to champion high quality teaching, learning and assessment, deliver outstanding results and ensure a first class resource for our community.

We are seeking a talented individual who will play a key role in continuing our journey towards excellence. With a proven track record in curriculum leadership, the successful candidate will have the ability to develop and implement holistic strategies, motivate high performing teams within the broad portfolio and leverage new opportunities. You will continue to raise the profile of the college, be an accomplished people manager and someone who can engage with staff, students, governors, employers and the college's wider community.

**For more information and an application pack please contact HR Department, Kirklees College, Huddersfield Centre, Waterfront Quarter, Manchester Road, Huddersfield, HD1 3HH, or electronically to: [jobs@kirkleescollege.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@kirkleescollege.ac.uk)**

**Closing date: Thursday 23 January 2014 at 12 noon**

**The selection centre will take place on 20 and 21 February 2014.**

**For further information or an informal discussion contact June Durrant, Deputy Principal – Curriculum, Performance and Innovation on 01484 437004.**

*Our senior leadership team is currently under-represented in all BME categories; we therefore particularly welcome applications from candidates within these groups.*



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**"Uxbridge College is an outstanding college."**

Ofsted Report May 2008

## Course Team Leader: Vocational Business (Level 1 and Level 2)

Salary in the range of £32,177 - £38,045 including London Weighting

Uxbridge College is a highly successful Further Education College in West London and we achieved the grade of 'Outstanding' in our last Ofsted inspection (May 2008). We are seeking to appoint a Course Team Leader to teach on a range of business courses and lead on Vocational Business programmes for Level 1 and Level 2. You will also provide supervision for the team of Lecturers.

You will have a degree in Business, and will possess an advanced level teaching qualification or be working towards one. You should have experience of teaching Business in a school or FE College and will have achieved good lesson observation grades. You should have some recent commercial experience and ideally have some team leadership and curriculum co-ordination experience. You should also be knowledgeable about compliance systems in further or secondary education and have a good record of their implementation.



**Closing date: Friday 24th January 2014**



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#EICE



## FE Week Sudoku challenge

		4				7		
6			5	3	1			9
9		8				6		1
	4		1		3		7	
			7		5			
	2		8		6		3	
4		3				9		2
7			4	8	2			5
		5				8		

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

How to play:  
Fill in all  
blank squares  
making sure  
that each row,  
column and  
3 by 3 box  
contains the  
numbers 1 to 9

Solutions:  
Next week

			6					9
8			7			3		
	5	2	9	4		7		
						4	2	9
		9				8		
7	6	4						
		3		9	4	2	1	
		1			6			8
	4				2			

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## Last Week's solutions

1	4	9	7	8	2	5	6	3
7	3	5	9	6	4	2	1	8
2	8	6	3	5	1	9	7	4
6	2	7	5	1	8	4	3	9
4	5	3	2	7	9	6	8	1
8	9	1	4	3	6	7	5	2
3	1	2	6	9	7	8	4	5
9	6	8	1	4	5	3	2	7
5	7	4	8	2	3	1	9	6

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

6	1	5	7	3	4	9	2	8
2	8	4	9	6	1	7	5	3
3	7	9	8	5	2	6	1	4
4	5	6	3	2	7	1	8	9
1	2	7	6	8	9	4	3	5
8	9	3	4	1	5	2	6	7
9	3	2	5	7	6	8	4	1
7	6	8	1	4	3	5	9	2
5	4	1	2	9	8	3	7	6

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

Spot the difference  
to WIN an FE Week mug! →



Photo by Andy Whitehead



Spot five differences. First entry wins an FE Week mug. Text your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to 07969 166 374.

Last week's spot the difference winner was Macclesfield College's Sue Rawsthorne, PA to principal Simon Andrews.